

Are You Depressed?

Natural Remedies Can Lift Your Spirit and Keep You from Singing the Blues



We've all felt the blues at one time or another. Feeling down, sad, tired and unmotivated because of a temporary loss or setback is pretty normal. However, sometimes people can get down in the dumps and just can't get back up again. They become clinically depressed.

If you're suffering from depression, you aren't alone. Statistics suggest that about 18.8 million American adults suffer from depression, which is just shy of 10% of the adult U.S. population. And, adults aren't the only ones suffering from depression. It is also increasingly common in teens and children.

In the modern medical world, depression is usually treated with drugs called antidepressants. According to a study done in 2006 by the National Institute of Health, antidepressants don't have a very good success rate. They found that only 30% of people with depression are helped with their first round of antidepressant drugs. Patients often have to go through many different prescriptions and experience numerous side effects before finding a drug that helps.

These drugs are simply masking the way a person feels. They aren't addressing the real causes of depression at all. Worse yet, these drugs sometimes make a person's mood worse, including making people more depressed and even suicidal.

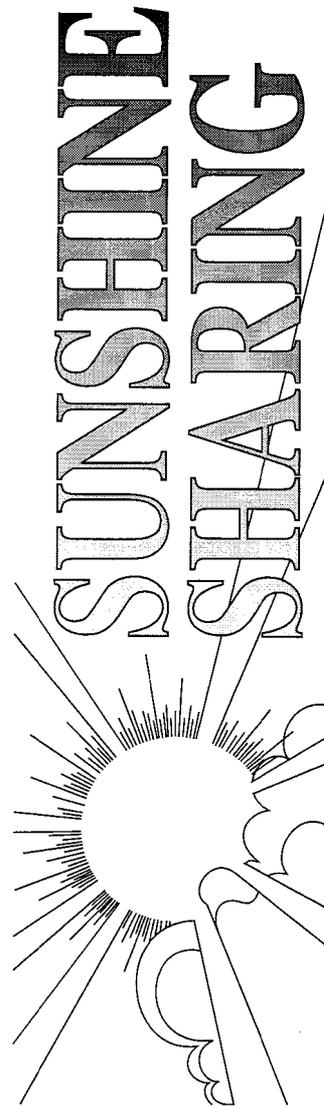
Getting Help With Depression

It's estimated that 80% of people suffering from depression don't seek help. It has also been shown that 54% of people suffering from depression believe that their depression is a sign of their own personal weakness. So, people often don't seek help because they don't want to admit they are weak. Depression makes them feel hopeless. They may think, "What's the point of trying to get better?"

However, when we are depressed we should seek help. Depression isn't really a disease, it's a symptom telling us that something is wrong in our life. The cause may be psychological, such as grief over the loss of a loved one or beloved pet, financial losses, chronic pain or illness, abuse or a series of difficult and stressful challenges in life. Or, the cause may be physical, including reactions to medications (including antidepressant drugs), nutritional deficiencies, hormonal imbalances, and other physical health problems.

In either case, what we really need is help in identifying what's wrong so we can fix it. If the cause is psychological, getting counseling, spiritual help, or even help from one's close friends and family is the best therapy. If the cause is physical, we need to talk with someone who understands the body holistically and who can evaluate overall health and help correct physical imbalances that may be contributing to our depression.

In this issue of *Sunshine Sharing*, we'll discuss six different approaches to dealing with depression naturally without resorting to antidepressant drug. Don't be afraid to seek help and advice in determining which approaches are best for you. Getting a helping hand when you're down isn't a sign of weakness; it's simply the smart thing to do.



Your guide to better health the natural way.

Vol. 20 No. 12

Important Notice

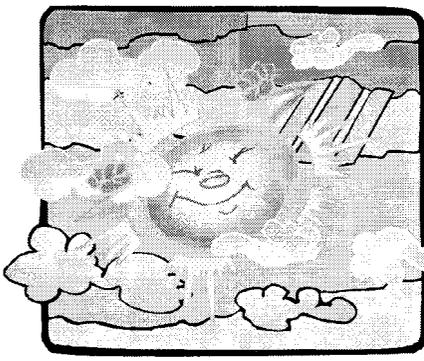
The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

Sunshine Sharing is an independent educational publication and receives no financial support from any herb or health product manufacturer. Your comments, questions and personal experiences are welcome. Send them to *Sunshine Sharing*, P.O. Box 911239, St. George, UT 84791-1239 or comments@treelite.com.

Copyright © 2009 by Tree of Light Publishing (a division of Kether-One, Inc.). Photocopying this publication for distribution is strictly forbidden. If you receive a photocopy of this publication, the distributor of said photocopies is in violation of copyright law.

Managing Editor/Writer: Steven Horne
Assistant Editor/Writer: Katie Horne
Associate Editors: Carolyn & Hugh Hughes, Sharon Grimes, David Horne

Let the Sunshine of Good Health Overcome the Clouds of Depression



Depression is a sign that something is wrong with our physical or psychological health. If we restore our health, our mood and energy will

return. Here are six approaches to improving physical, mental and emotional health that can lift the gloom of depression without resorting to chemical drugs. To help determine which approaches are best for you, talk to the person who gave you this newsletter.

Give Your Tired Thyroid and Reproductive Glands a Boost

A very common physical cause of depression is hormonal imbalances. Low levels of thyroid or reproductive hormones are major causes of fatigue, lack of motivation, mental confusion, loss of sex drive and other common symptoms of depression.

Low thyroid is characterized by fatigue and weakness, dry skin, brittle nails, hair loss, low body temperature, cold hands and feet, constipation, memory problems, having trouble thinking clearly and heavy or irregular menstrual periods. It is a common cause of depression in women.

If your depression is accompanied by symptoms of low thyroid, try supplementing your diet with more iodine in the form of **Liquid Dulse**, **Thyroid Activator** or **Black Walnut ATC Concentrate**. **Thyroid Support** is a thyroid glandular that can also help rebuild low thyroid.

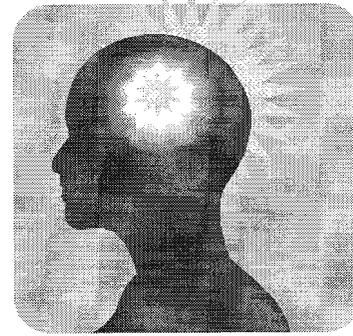
Depression in women is often associated with PMS, menopause, and childbirth because they lead to lower levels of reproductive hormones. One of the best remedies for hormonal-related depression in women is **black cohosh**. Black cohosh is an excellent anti-depressant herb for depression associated with feeling abused, trapped or having a sensation that one is entangled in darkness or surrounded by a black cloud.

Men can suffer depression from low testosterone levels, something which is becoming increasingly common in modern America due to increased exposure to xenoestrogens. Low testosterone results in a lack of masculine drive or energy, weight gain, lack of muscle tone and feelings of low self esteem. If this is the cause of your depression, **DHEA-M** or **Korean Ginseng** may help restore your energy, drive and mood.

When depression is associated with a loss of sex drive in men or women, consider **damiana**. Damiana is a powerful mood elevator that is often overlooked as a potential remedy for hormonal-related depression in men and women.

Balance Your Brain Chemistry With Diet and Supplements

The most widely used class of drugs used to treat depression are selective serotonin re-uptake inhibitors (SSRIs). SSRIs affect a neurotransmitter called serotonin, which has an influence on our appetite, mood and sleep. Another neurotransmitter involved in depression is dopamine, which plays an important role in having a positive mood and a normal sex drive.



What Americans don't realize is that diet has a huge impact on dopamine and serotonin levels in the brain. The refined carbohydrates in the Standard American Diet (SAD) are extremely unbalancing to brain chemistry and can *literally* make you sad. They lack B-vitamins and minerals needed to synthesize neurotransmitters and while they can temporarily boost serotonin levels, they cause an equally big "crash" in mood a few hours later.

Since neurotransmitters are made from amino acids, starting the day with 3-4 ounces of quality protein helps one have a better mood throughout the day. A protein shake made with **Love and Peas** or **Nutri-Burn** can help stabilize mood and blood sugar levels. Another option is to take two capsules of **Super Algae** at breakfast, two more at lunch and two more about four in the afternoon. Super Algae supplies plant based amino acids that have a stabilizing effect on brain chemistry.

During the day, eat small meals of quality proteins and complex carbohydrates (primarily vegetables with lesser quantities of fruits and whole grains) along with small quantities of quality fats. This helps your mood stay stable throughout the day.

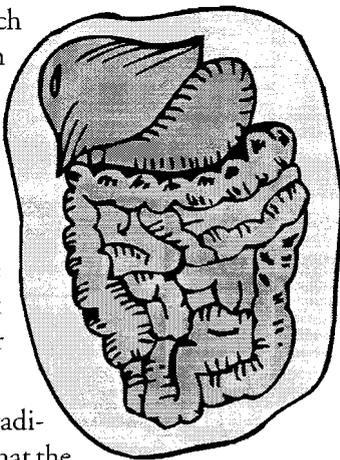
If you want to boost serotonin levels naturally try taking **5-HTP**. Serotonin levels are dependent on brain levels of an amino acid called l-tryptophan. When l-tryptophan enters the brain, it is converted to 5-hydroxy-tryptophan (5-HTP) which is then converted to serotonin. 5-HTP directly boosts serotonin without the side effects of SSRIs. **St. John's wort** has also been shown to affect serotonin levels.

If you crave chocolate, you may need to boost dopamine levels, too, as chocolate stimulates dopamine. Eating red meat for breakfast, particularly if you are an O blood type will also be very helpful. Super Algae is also helpful.

Other remedies that balance neurotransmitters include **B-Complex** vitamins and **SAM-e**. Good fats, like **Super Omega 3 EPA** and **DHA**, also help the brain function better.

Heal Your Liver and Intestines

Although it isn't an approach recognized by modern Western medicine, depression has been treated traditionally by improving the function of the digestive tract and liver. Traditionally, depression was known as melancholia or melancholy and was thought to be due to an excess of black bile. Black bile is roughly equivalent to our modern idea of toxins.



Science has confirmed these traditional thoughts. Today we know that the intestines produce neurotransmitters such as serotonin, and also contain serotonin receptors. They also communicate with the brain via the vagus nerve. So digestive health does have a direct impact on emotional health and a toxic system can lead to depression.

When we are constipated or the intestines are inflamed, we can experience "auto-intoxication." Irritants from the intestines are absorbed into the blood stream and transported to the liver. With a nutritionally deficient diet, the liver becomes increasingly burdened in its efforts to detoxify the blood. This produces a feeling of heaviness and congestion that makes us feel lethargic, heavy, sluggish, burdened and generally "weighed down."

When depression is associated with this toxic congestion nothing beats the Chinese formula **Mood Elevator** for relieving it. This formula lifts the chi, energy of the body, and helps to ease feelings of sadness, heaviness and depression. It also eases anxiety associated with depression. Mood Elevator also lifts sagging organs, so if you also have a large stomach, sagging colon or prolapsed uterus, it is a good choice.

Many people also report feeling "lighter" and having a better mood after doing a colon cleanse. Signs that you may need a cleanse include bad breath, strong body odor, a heavily coated tongue (especially at the back), hard, dry stools and constipation (bowel movements once per day or less).

A particularly helpful cleanse for depression is the **Tiao He Cleanse**, which contains the Chinese **Liver Balance** formula that relieves constricted liver energy. Using the Tiao He Cleanse along with a serving of a dietary fiber supplement like **Psyllium Hulls Combination** or **Nature's Three** twice daily (before breakfast and before bedtime) can make a person's mood lighter. Use **Everybody's Fiber** as your fiber supplement if you suffer from any kind of inflammatory bowel disorder.

Indigestion, belching, gas and bloating are also signs you may need to regulate your digestion. Try taking digestive enzymes with meals, such as **Proactazyme Plus** or **Food Enzymes**. **St. John's wort** not only affects serotonin, it also helps regulate digestion via the vagus nerve, so it is also helpful for depression associated with digestive problems.

Support Adrenal Function & Relieve Stress

Depression can sometimes be the result of chronic stress that depletes the adrenal glands. When depression is associated with anxiety, insomnia and a series of stressful events in one's life, adaptogens and adrenal tonics will probably help.

Symptoms of depression associated with adrenal fatigue and stress include general exhaustion, difficulty sleeping soundly, foggy thinking, low sex drive, lack of will power and drive, feeling moody or "touchy," and feeling tired and agitated at the same time. When you experience these symptoms **Adrenal Support** or **Nervous Fatigue Formula** may be helpful.

Nervines that help you relax and get a good night's sleep can also be useful. Consider **Herbal Sleep** and **Kava Kava**. Kava Kava is a mood elevator as well as a tension reliever. It promotes a calm, alert state of mind. Also consider **Nutri-Calm** or **Balanced B-Complex**, as these remedies feed the nervous system, balance neurotransmitters and relieve stress and anxiety.

Beat the Wintertime Blues

One form of depression is Seasonal Affective Disorder. This is depression brought on by lack of exposure to natural sunlight. It is a common form of depression in the winter months, especially in cold, northern climates.

In the winter, many people drive to work in the dark, work all day under artificial lights and then drive home in the dark, never seeing any natural sunlight. Light coming into the eyes affects hormone and neurotransmitter levels via the pineal gland. Artificial lighting does not contain all the wavelengths found in natural sunlight and this lack can contribute to feelings of sadness and depression.

To remedy this, try to get out into the sunlight for at least 30 minutes a day in the winter. If possible, install full spectrum lighting where you live and work. It will help your mood.

Continued on Page Four



Additional Help and Information

For more information about how to deal with depression using natural remedies contact the person who gave you this newsletter. Their contact information should be found at the top of page four. They have additional handouts and resource materials to help you. You can also consult some of the following sources:

Clues for Solving the Blues DVD with Steven Horne (www.treelite.com)
Manage Your Mood DVD with Steven Horne (www.treelite.com)
Healing Anxiety and Depression by Daniel G. Amen and Lisa C. Routh
Your Drug May Be Your Problem: How and Why to Stop Taking Psychiatric Medications by Peter R. Breggin and David Cohen

Are You Feeling Down, Discouraged and Depressed?

**Learn Six Natural Ways to
Lift Your Mood, Restore Your
Energy and Bring Some "Light"
Back into Your Life in this Issue
of Sunshine Sharing**



Continued from Page Three

Sunlight is needed to convert cholesterol to vitamin D in the skin. Traditionally, people who lived in cold northern climates ate foods rich in vitamin D during the winter. In modern times, taking **vitamin D3** during the dark days of winter can boost the mood, as well as enhance immunity during the winter months. St. John's wort is also helpful for Seasonal Affective Disorder.

Heal Your Emotional Wounds

We have already talked about some ways that depression may not be physical in origin. It can also be brought on by trauma, abuse, sadness and grief. Everyone gets emotionally "wounded" at one time or another in life. We suffer setbacks, death, prolonged illness, accidents and/or traumatizing emotional experiences.

When these difficult events happen, it is very important for us to work through our feelings, rather than just bottle them up and hope they go away.

Chronic depression can be a sign that our personal boundary (our right to control our own lives and think our own thoughts) was not respected when we were young. Overbearing and abusive parents or other adult care-givers can leave emotional scars that need to be addressed and healed before depression can be resolved. If this was the case with you, seek competent professional help to resolve these childhood wounds.

It is not weakness to seek help. We need to understand that we are not alone in the sufferings and difficulties we experience in our life. So, don't be ashamed to seek the help you need.